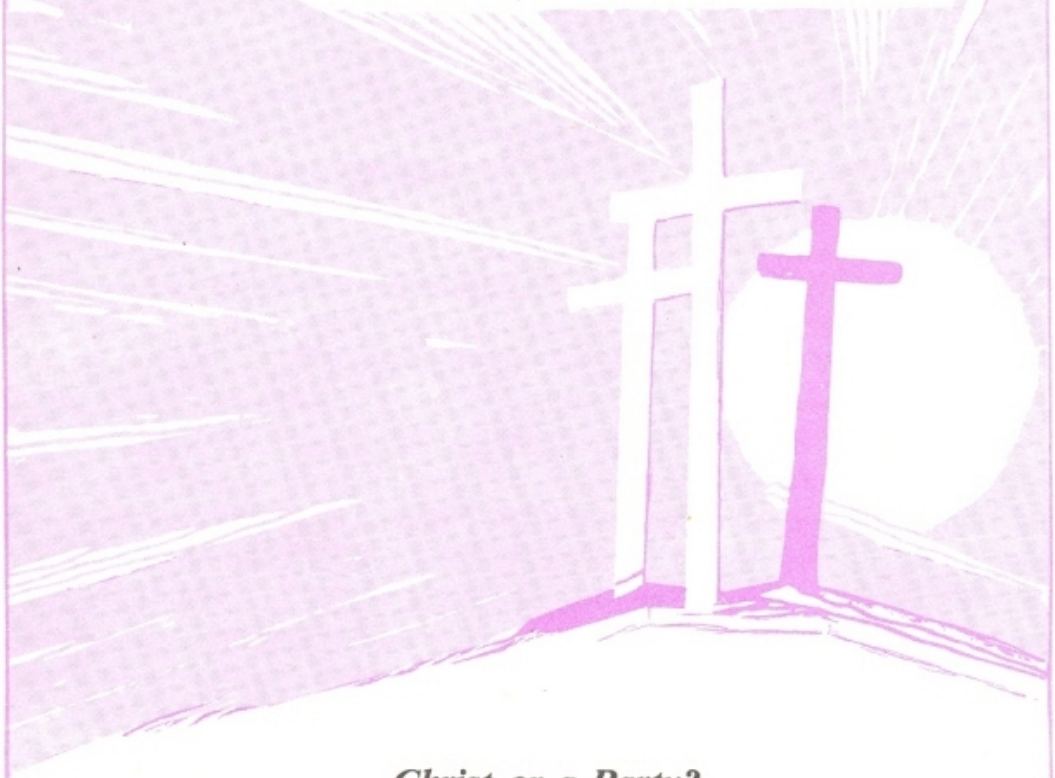
RESTORATION REVIEW



Christ or a Party?

If I thought being an evangelical Christian involved a party loyalty which took precedence over allegiance to Christ, I would give up being an evangelical immediately. The very idea of subordinating Christ to a party is abhorrent to me. The evangelical's sincerely held belief is that his very loyalty to Christ requires him to hold evangelical views.

— John R. W. Stott in *Christ the Controversalist*

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Jesus Today . . .

JESUS IS LIKE TELSTAR

For almost a decade now we Americans have been the beneficiaries of Telstar, even if we no longer give a lot of thought to it, but only recently have I viewed that magnificent satellite through the eyes of someone on the other side of the Atlantic. An Englishman has commented: “It was simply wonderful to see live American programmes on the screens, and it must have been equally wonderful for the Americans to see personalities and places in Europe.” He noted that it was the purpose of Telstar to link countries together divided by the great Atlantic, and to enable them to see and to hear each other.

It occurs to me that Jesus is like that. He is the magnificent unitist in that he joins together that which would otherwise be forever separated. In him people transcend sex, race, culture, age, nationality, and even religion. The apostle Paul seems to see this truth in cosmic terms in Eph. 1:10: “That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth.” *Everything*, even nature itself, will eventually be one in Christ. He sees Jesus as the great unifier. Paul does not seem to see this universal union as conditional. It *will* be a reality sometime in God’s tomorrow --- “in the fulness of times.” The NEB renders it beautifully: “He has made known to us his hidden purpose --- such was his will and pleasure determined beforehand in Christ --- to be put into effect when the time was ripe: namely, that the universe, all in heaven and on earth, might be brought into a unity in Christ.”

Jesus is like Telstar, bringing people and nations together. Our English friend who writes of the excitement of Telstar may not interpret the things he sees and hears through Telstar in exactly the same way we do, but he is aware that the orbiting satellite brings us closer together. Telstar does what nothing else could do, virtually erasing the dimension of “far off”. These are Paul’s words as he writes about the great unifier, *separate* and *far off*. “You were at that time separate from Christ,” he tells the Gentiles in Eph. 2:12-13, “But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” No one wants to be separate and far off, but how exciting it is to be brought near, especially when the proximity is God himself! What a fellowship that is, fellowship with the heavenly Father!

Telstar is something like that in that it cultivates fellowship between people. Our English friend can become one with us in our anxiety over the murder of black youths in Atlanta or an attack on our President in Washington, seeing and hearing these things via

Telstar as soon as we do. We in turn can see and hear Margaret Thatcher speak before parliament right along with him, and as we sit, watch, and listen together, in spite of an ocean between us, we can compare notes on our mutual agony over unemployment and inflation.

Moreover, Jesus is like Telstar in that there is unfathomable mystery to it all, however much revelation and know-how we may suppose we have. When a scientist lays out all the facts that are known about Telstar, it is nonetheless baffling. No one can really explain its secrets, just as with radio, TV, x-ray, laser beam, and a thousand other things. The lowly telephone even awes me! Recently I talked to a friend in Korea and it was just as if he were next door. What a world we live in, with things like Telstar and telephones!

Jesus is like that. Just as a scientist will tell you with straight face that Telstar is simple, you can also be told that the story of Jesus is as simple as the humble peasant girl that gave him birth. And it is true in a way. Like Telstar Jesus is wonderfully simple and simply wonderful. And yet no one can even begin to penetrate the mystery of the incarnation --- "The word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father" --- or the nature of Christ as eternal Logos --- "Although he existed in the form of God, he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant and being made in the likeness of men."

Even his "simple teaching," as we are wont to describe it, is staggeringly profound, even the most elementary. "The kingdom of heaven is like . . ." Was he really trying to make it simple? Is there not considerable *indirection* in his teaching, so that his hearers would have to reach out somewhat, far beyond themselves, to understand? Matt. 11 :25 makes it clear that his teaching was purposely hidden from "the wise and the intelligent" (Does that include us?) and revealed to babes. But even the babes were baffled. His own disciples apparently understood but little of what he was talking about. Sometimes they were downright stupid, and he told them so (see Mk. 7:18, 8:17).

Like Telstar, it is by its very nature too much for us, for it touches a reality that is thus far largely incomprehensible to us. We can but look through a glass darkly. Jesus was put into orbit, as it were, by Power that we know not of, except vaguely, and he is Son of God as well as Son of Man, a Person that belongs to two worlds, an infinite Being that moved into our finite world, pitching his tent among us for awhile. Heb. 5:7 states it dramatically, *In the days of his flesh he offered up prayers to the one who was able to save him from death.* How utterly mysterious! Deity praying to deity for deliverance from death! He was beyond time and flesh, and then there were "the days of his flesh." I identify with his disciples, for it is also too much for me!

But Telstar is like that. If you spend much time trying to fathom even the mysteries of this world, it can drive you nutty. Thank God that we can plug into the power of the mysteries even when we cannot understand. This is the beauty of the Christian faith. We are not told that we have to understand it but to believe it. When Jesus tells us what the kingdom of God is like (Perhaps today he would say that it is like Telstar or a laser beam!), we have some notion of what he is talking about in spite of all the mystery. Perhaps *he* is in essence the kingdom of God, for we see it has to do with peace, love, joy, and doing the Father's will in this world.

That may be the point. We are not to comprehend as much as we are to act. We become new creations by being born from above, not philosophers who understand all mysteries. By its very nature knowledge puffs us while love builds up, the apostle reminds us, so it is clear which we are to pursue. Our pursuit of knowledge must always be a means, while love remains the end in view.

Finally, Jesus is like Telstar in that he is the great communicator. The time was --- when we were all "far off" --- when we had no contact with "the other side." Without Jesus we have no knowledge of God's love and mercy. In putting Jesus into orbit, instantaneously in contact with all mankind, God provides mankind access to Himself. Because of Jesus as communicator, the Father will move into our hearts and make His home with us. Jesus makes it possible for us to live together in peace and harmony. Paul says he removed the wall of partition, thus taking away the barriers. Whether prostitutes, beggars, unscrupulous business tycoons, self-righteous Pharisees, despised Samaritans, or unwanted children, he *found* them and linked them to God and to each other and to other people.

Like Telstar. he is always in orbit, always there, communicating and bringing us together, providing inexhaustible power for our hard-to-live-in world. --- *the Editor*

There is a factory in Derby which makes the famous Crown Derby china. If you visit that factory, you will see artists applying very unattractive paints to the china --- yellowish-brown, bluish-black, dirty-looking red. The edge of the china is circled in black. Then the china is fired, and the fire brings about an amazing transformation. When the pieces are taken out of the kiln, the blue and red have become lustrous and bright; the black has become gold. It is through the furnace of sorrow and suffering that some of the choicest saints are conformed to the image of Christ. He would teach us that our sufferings, like his cross, can become the path to glory. - *Expository Times*

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THE PERIL OF HAVING NOTHING TO DO WITH ANYONE ELSE

There is a logical dilemma from which you may be able to extricate those of us known as Churches of Christ. We claim to be a unity people, a part of the so-called Restoration Movement, which was an effort to unite the Christians in all the sects. Yet we have become a very exclusive people, having little or nothing to do with our religious neighbors in anything religious. We may watch TV with them, garden with them, work with them in the PTA, and our kids and their kids may even date, with or without our highest approval. But we will not go to their church except for funerals and weddings, even if we expect them to come to ours now and again, maybe.

Their preachers and our preachers have no contact, not even to pray together. It is rare when any of our preachers associate with theirs in the ministerial alliance. Our churches have nothing to do with theirs, whether in cooperative efforts in serving needy people, preaching the gospel, celebrating Easter or Thanksgiving, or even in community projects. In spite of all the opportunities for meaningful contact, their youth and ours are as separated as if they lived in different parts of the world. When our exclusivism is at its worst, we do not even consider others as Christians and we presume to be "the true church" to the exclusion of all others. This of course turns folk off, and they have learned not to expect any response from us unless it is something negative. We are dumped in with the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and other isolated sects. We therefore are not on the mailing lists of those who make up "the Christian world" around us.

But the Mormons and the Witnesses are not part of a unity heritage. By virtue of our reason-to-be we are to be a cooperative people, a church that reaches out to others in spite of theological differences, for how else can there be a serious plea for unity? That is the logical dilemma: *How can we be a unity people when we will have nothing to do with anyone else?* There is peril in the logic, so I solicit your help. Does not something have to give? Either we must concede that we are not unitists after all, but a narrow, exclusivistic people that make extravagant claims about their identity. Or we must join the Christian world and become part of the answer to a lot of problems facing the believing community around the world. There is no way for unitists to be separatists, for the terms are mutually exclusive.

In facing up to the logic of our dilemma, it may help to consider that there is a fallacy in our thinking that is responsible for a lot of this. The fallacy is this: *If we associate or enjoy fellowship with others, we are approving or endorsing things we believe to be wrong.* For example, if we cooperate with Baptists and Roman Catholics in a drug-abuse program, then we are "having fellowship," as our folk quaintly put it, with all the errors we

have ever attributed to such folk. This is strange logic, so strange that we dare not try to apply it to other areas of our life, not even to our association with each other, for what two people among us agree on every single point of doctrine? Who among us is completely free of error?

The truth is that this is nothing more than a debilitating, stupid habit, a foolish error in long division. It is silly to conclude that if we join in with others in feeding the poor of the world or in publishing the Bible that we are endorsing their sins, assuming that their sins are greater than ours, which may also be perilous.

There is nothing either in our history or in the Scriptures that will support our exclusivism. The very first Church of Christ in the Campbell movement, Brush Run in Old Virginia, was a member of a Baptist association of churches. Even as they joined they made it clear that they differed on some things and that they would be a Church of Christ and not a Baptist church. Why should we not do likewise, doing our own thing in our own way, and yet doing things with others in areas where we all agree? And let's face it: we all agree far more than we disagree. We can work together in unity on most things. Are we going to continue to be duped by the old fallacy that if we cannot work together in some areas we cannot work together in anything?

When our people venture forth and do something constructive with others it causes them to grow a foot taller. At my side is a bulletin from the Southern Hills Church of Christ in Tulsa, in which one of our preachers tells of his experience on the sea of Galilee. He was with fifty others from many denominations, including three Baptist preachers. He describes it as a "marvelous spiritual fellowship," and relates how they sang, laughed, and cried together. They asked him to give a devotional, which was received with great appreciation.

In retrospect he writes this of the experience: "If for these eleven days we could lay aside our denominational differences and unite our spirits around the central factors of Christianity, why can't we do so from now on?"

He goes on to say: "We have in the past erected walls of isolation between us that have marked off denominational lines. God did not build these walls. We did! They are stupid and senseless, for they have created competing denominations instead of unified disciples. The Lord prayed for unity of his disciples (John 17), while we have built barriers of division. I appeal to you for us not only to get back to the God of the Word, but the Word of God. Let us obey His will, and lay aside these senseless doctrinal issues that estrange us."

There is grave peril in our not heeding our brother's plea, the peril of becoming a negative, nonproductive, isolated sect that is encased in a straightjacket of isolationism. There is also the peril of ignoring the Lord's prayer for the unity of all believers, assuming that the Father either will not or cannot respond to the prayer of His own son. There is also the peril of further dehumanizing our people, denying them of such normal Christian experiences as described by our brother on the sea of Galilee. Thank God that water sometimes makes that much difference!

What did our brother lose in that experience. Nothing. He rather gained a great deal. What compromise did he make with any error held by those he was with? None at all. He was doing something very normal for a believer: enjoying the sweet fellowship of other believers. This can and will become more common as we assert our liberty in Jesus and no longer allow ourselves to be victimized by the keepers of the party.

We have our mandate from Scripture: *Wherefore receive one another even as I have received you.* (Rom. 15:7) - *the Editor*

THANK GOD, NO SANCTUARY!

The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him. - Hab. 2:20

If you should visit the Church of Christ in Denton, Texas where Ouida and I are members, as folk do from all over the country, you might not be impressed with our building, for it was once a super market and is very unchurch like. It is roomy and spacious enough to house a day school, which one of our sisters conducts, and its movable chairs allows for gatherings of various sorts, whether it be a coffee house, a teenage party, or a women's luncheon. Our deacons recently decided to allow the YMCA, which does not yet have a facility of its own in our city, to use it periodically through the week for classes in calisthenics, in spite of the likelihood of some B.O. still wafting about on Sunday morning!

All this and much more led one of our sisters to say, *We hardly have a sanctuary here.* My reply was, *Thank God, no sanctuary!*

If sanctuary is understood to be a holy place or a special dwelling place of God, we are forced to conclude, in the light of Scripture, that there are no sanctuaries or holy places anywhere on earth. Not in Rome or Constantinople or Mecca or Jerusalem. Nowhere, not even in Denton, not even the Little Chapel-in-the-Woods where Ouida and I were married. I am sometimes awed by ecclesiastical edifices, whether Westminster Abbey or the Church

of St. John the Divine, but I can only conclude that such places are no holier than my living room or a pizza parlor or the old farm back home, though I realize my language would strike some people as near blasphemous. True, God is in some sense everywhere, including cathedrals and coal mines, but I have no evidence that He is in one place anymore than in another.

Perhaps I should guard my words, for it was such talk as this that cost the first Christian martyr his life. Solomon built a house for God, Stephen says in Acts 7:47, but still "the Most High does not dwell in houses made with hands," he told them, citing their own Scriptures as evidence: "Heaven is my throne and the earth my footstool. What house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest?" It was too much for those who presumed Jerusalem to be holy and the temple to be sacred, so they murdered Stephen. Now and again I am given the tour of a new facility at this or that church, and I am introduced to educational units, offices, fellowship hall, and "the sanctuary." Occasionally there will be some such notice over the entrance as "Sanctuary. Quiet Please." The implication is that there is something especially holy about that particular part of the building, more than the rest rooms or kitchen. One is to be quiet in the sanctuary, while he can be his jolly good self in the kitchen, for there is nothing holy about a kitchen! But I am persuaded that even in church edifices the Most High is as much present in the room where the cookstove is as He is the room where the pulpit is --- or where "the altar" is, to name something that is deemed to be super holy!

Part of the problem is a misconception of such Scriptures as the one quoted above: *The Lord* is *in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.* It is presumed that churches (people) can build holy temples and that God will dwell in them. But even in the Old Testament where the Jews had (sort of) holy places and holy things, the God of heaven chose to dwell in human hearts rather than in buildings fashioned by human hands. Psa. 51 recognizes that there is but one *real* sacrifice in the sight of God, "a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart." This is why Paul as well as Stephen in the New Testament drives home the point that the God who made heaven and earth does not live in shrines made by man (Acts 17:24).

So, the holy temple that the prophet spoke of is heaven itself, the dwelling place of God. *God* is *in heaven and all those on earth should be silent or reverent in His presence* is what Hab. 2:20 is saying. It is like Psa. I 1:4"The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven; his eyes behold, his eyelids test, the children of men."

My concern about this is more than a dispute about words. It is part of our heritage that we call Bible things by Bible names, and we have long insisted that if something cannot be described in scriptural terminology it must not be scriptural. Some of our lingo may come

from the Babel of confused sectarianism, diverting us from our mission of restoring a scriptural vocabulary for the modern church. *Sanctuary* is a biblical concept, but it is grossly mischievous to apply it to anything that is the work of our own hands. No room ever built by man, even if with silver and gold, can be the sanctuary of God.

The Scriptures make it clear that it is the church, "the household of God," that is the only "holy temple in the Lord" that the Father has upon this earth, and that it is believers that are "built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit" (Eph. 2:21-22). "You are God's temple and God's Spirit dwells in you" were Paul's words to real live people in I Cor. 3:16, not to brick and mortar, not to chapels and abbeys, not even to cathedrals. Edifices for one reason or another may be worthy of certain respect, just as a cemetery or a memorial park may be, but that cannot mean that any pile of stone or plot of ground, however honored by men, is the dwelling place of the heavenly Father.

Abraham Lincoln said of a burial place for our honored dead; "But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate --- we cannot consecrate --- we cannot hallow --- this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it, far beyond our poor power to add or detract." The President was only half right. No one, not even brave soldiers, can make a piece of this earth *holy*, which is what consecration means. I walk the grounds at Gettysburg with deep respect for its place in our history, but the Most High does not dwell in any portion of space fenced off by man, and that includes our "sanctuaries" that are only our own creations, sometimes the fruit of our pride. God has no shrines upon this earth except the hearts and minds of men and women. If all church edifices were destroyed today, the Most High would have no fewer dwelling places than He now has.

This beautiful truth lends meaning to the apostle's words in I Cor. 6:19: "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God." Thank God that He elects to dwell in my earthly tent since that is where I too dwell. He makes His home with me in my body through His Spirit, so that wherever I go He goes. No wonder Paul would add: "You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body." Praise God that He does not allow Himself to be boxed in, whether in a book or a creed or by lock and key. He will move inside every person's heart and soul and body that invites Him in.

It was an immense truth to Paul that "In him we live and move and have our being," which in some way applies to all men, for all mankind is His offspring. So the apostle would say to those pagans in Athens: *So he* is *not far from any of us.* That is as glorious as any truth needs to be, so what shall we say of the fact that God has made us, His adopted children in the Spirit, His dwelling place? We are His temples on earth! It is simply too

much for my small mind to handle, but I can nonetheless rejoice that I do not have to go to some building to find God.

Now will some of you be so kind as to give me a tour of your building so that I may see where the sanctuary of God assembles? - *the Editor*

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Pilgrimage of Joy. . . No. 54

TALKING PLAINLY WITH EACH OTHER

W Carl Ketcherside

The eighth annual unity forum was held July 5-7, 1973, at Tulsa, Oklahoma. Local disciples had worked diligently in promoting it. Brethren were in attendance from 15 states and Canada. The interest was superb. Perry Epler Gresham, former president of Bethany College, and an authority on Alexander Campbell, spoke the same night as I did. His style was inimitable. Although he was on the board of huge corporations, his speech was given in a kind of down-home, "cracker barrel style" which made him appear as a country philosopher.

I told a simple story about an early incident in my life, in which I reacted adversely against my brother because I became unsettled as to whose child I really was. It was a homely little piece which hardly deserved a hearing in such August circumstances. Yet it seemed to impress the audience in a manner which some of my more profound reasoning failed to do. I have wondered a lot of times since that night, if it might not be the case that we are divided purely because of our lack of ability to talk plainly and simply. Only recently I had a letter from a college professor who said he was searching one night for something which he could use to illustrate what fellowship was all about. He came across the article in *Mission,* and read it to his class. I have never been able to write another article of that kind, yet I wrote that one in one sitting. Apparently it dipped the well of communications dry.

I was impressed with the fact that few of the local members of the churches of Christ attended. I was told that they were warned not to come. Most of those who were present were "freedom fighters" who had struggled with the dogmatism and sterile orthodoxy of the institution and had wrenched themselves free. It was not yet time for people in general to get their eyes opened to the fact that they were being held as hostages to a System. That would come later. A goodly number of those who did come were self-styled "charismatics." I deplored the brand as a separatist title. It always appealed to me as being divisive in its very nature. Everyone who has a gift from God is charismatic, and that includes all.

Among these who came was Ben Franklin, who was later to hold a debate with Guy N. Woods. The debate did but little good. It settled nothing. But the unity group at Tulsa was significant in that it brought together a group of saints who might not otherwise have met. They learned to listen to one another despite wide divergences in their views.

Later, I went to the Lake Springfield Christian Assembly at Springfield, Illinois, to address a group of men. The camp was beautifully situated commanding a view of part of the lake. The brethren used it as a youth camp during the summer, and when September came, they availed themselves of the opportunity of getting together to talk over their problems and recount their victories. Generally they sought for speakers of reputation who could share with them new insights into the Word. I think that such gatherings are reminiscent of the pioneer culture of which we partook in our early years. People on the frontier felt an urge to come together to reinforce the faith, and to listen to a rehearsal of "those things most surely believed among us." It is a great loss that it becomes ever more difficult to get people to come to such meetings.

From there I went down to Cabool, Missouri in the Ozarks. It was an interesting place. It was a center of small farms from which came some of the 60,000 pounds of poultry per month, and the hundreds of cases of eggs shipped out every week. The Ozarks farmer does not try to conquer the wilderness. Instead, he makes friends with it. He is generally concerned with small plots of it that he can use for pasture and orchard. But chickens and eggs bring in the regular income. As the farmers say, "You can't rightly tell about fruit. Frost or blight is apt to get it. But not a hen. A hen works right on, rain or shine." Besides, the women can generally look after the chickens.

The congregation, like so many others in small areas, had been through some traumatic experiences. I sought to help them as much as I could. I was fortunate to have with me a dear brother and sister from Astoria, Illinois, Mr. and Mrs. Evan Price. Those who wished to do so gathered at a little restaurant daily and we talked and ate together, speaking quietly and meditatively together of our relationship to God through His marvelous grace.

I went next to Columbus, Indiana, where there are six thousand people who claim allegiance to Christ in the restoration movement. They are divided into several large congregations. I went to New Hope, which is just a short distance outside the city. The congregation dates way back in history. Immediately behind the meeting-house is an old cemetery, the markers of which indicate burials of many decades past. Daily I strolled through this hallowed spot where "the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep." The congregation is ably served by my good brother, Mat Malott. It was once primarily a

gathering-place of rural people. Now it is growing in membership and is composed of many from the city as well as from nearby towns.

At Fairborn, Ohio a pleasant surprise awaited. The crowds were so large as to necessitate extra chairs in the aisles at night. The day sessions, which were open forums, brought in more than sixty persons. The questions were of special interest. The answers were eagerly received. It was in these daytime sessions that the greatest good was accomplished. One thing which impressed me was the similarity of the questions. Whether it was in a Christian Church or Church of Christ, whether in the city or in a rural setting, the same things troubled the people.

November 5, I went to Terre Haute, Indiana, at the invitation of the campus ministry, to deliver three addresses in a hall on the campus of the State University. It was a delightful occasion. I met with the Christian students early in the morning for prayer and Bible Study before the sun was up. An excellent audience was present each night, with brethren coming from far and near to be a part of the encounter. It was during this time I learned a great deal about Elton Trueblood and the "Yokefellow Movement" which he began. I was not too far from Richmond, Indiana. Trueblood credits C. S. Lewis with his conversion from a liberal theologian to a Christ-centered believer. In his autobiography he writes, "C. S. Lewis reached me primarily because he turned the intellectual tables."

It was about this time that a new journalistic enterprise began. It was devoted primarily to reaching Disciples of Christ, Independent Christian Churches, and Churches of Christ. It had three consulting editors, one drawn from each segment. It was aptly and significantly titled "Fellowship." Several issues were printed and they contained some meaty articles. But it never really got off the ground. I have often wondered why. I have come to the conclusion that it was because it represented the dream of a top echelon of men. No movement has ever marched which did not begin at the grass-roots level. A great many lesser, and much inferior, papers are being published in our day. And "Fellowship" seems to have been needed so much.

At Indiana University, Stanley McDaniel, who was a professor at College of the Redwoods in California, when we first met, made application to do his doctoral theme on "The Life and Preaching of W. Carl Ketcherside." Permission was granted and Stanley, who now teaches at Johnson Bible College, began collecting my materials. He did not neglect any source. The result' is that he accumulated the largest body of my writings of anyone on earth. He listened to numerous tapes, besides reading every book and paper to which I had contributed. Finally, after several years he completed his thesis. I appreciate what he said, but I still wonder why the university agreed to allow it to be written about such an obscure personage.

I went next to address the annual banquet of the Eastern Lakeland Christian Campus Ministry at Charleston, Illinois. I felt while I was there that it was one of the most effective and best conducted of any such work I had seen. The students seemed to be gung-ho for Jesus. They were not Christians and students, but Christian who were students. There is a difference. The first think of their student life as separate from their Christian commitment; the second see it as merely a part of it. In my talk I sought to recapture for all their mission. They were "secret agents" for another kingdom. They were on enemy territory and in an alien land. They had been dropped behind the lines as commandos for Christ. They were on a search and rescue mission. They were members of the heavenly Central Intelligence Agency. Their allegiance was not to the school first but to their absent King. Someday He would return and rescue them from the asphalt jungle.

A short time before, the Humanist Society issued Humanist Manifesto Number Two. It was anything but complicated. It was a plain declaration of war against everything which I held dear. It called for a freeing of the American mind from what it called the fear and dread of the supernatural, and predicted that by the year 2000, all forms of superstition and religion would pass from the scene. It was a calculated flinging down of the gauntlet in the face of those who believed that Jesus was the Son of God. It was signed by a host of men and women who were regarded as the most erudite in our land. They were the instructors of thousands of our youth. Among them were a couple of professors at Indiana University. Recognizing the grave danger of raw humanism being dumped like raw sewage into the clear streams of thought, and realizing that it had already infiltrated our whole life structure, I welcomed the opportunity to appear on the campus of Indiana University at Bloomington, to discuss openly the implications of the manifesto.

I carefully studied the whole question until I was thoroughly conversant with its appeal to the modern scientific and technological mind. I became convinced that the inclination to place all things in the realm of relativity had laid the foundation of the theory in its modern form. So I sat down and worked out my presentation on a three prong basis. (I) Where I agreed with humanism; (2) Where I disagreed with humanism; (3) My personal apology, in which I set forth the reasons for believing that the faith for which I make my plea is far superior to humanism. I gave a five point breakdown in developing the last. It was a privilege to be on a modern campus and to be brought into contact with some of the brilliant minds to be found there. Yet it was tragic to see how far the school had drifted since the days when David Starr Jordan was president of the institution.

I closed the year with the brethren at Washington, Illinois. They had invited me to come and speak on the theme "Meeting Problems of Today's Youth." It was one of my favorite subjects and I was quick to accept the invitation. Reconstructing the year in my memory, it appeared to be one in which God had been rich in His abundant mercies. I had

traveled all over the United States without undue incident. I had engaged in all kinds of encounters and had come out relatively unscathed. It was a great feeling to be used of God in so many different ways and for so many things. I faced the coming year with confidence in the divine mercy and compassion.

As 1834 drew to a close, Alexander Campbell wrote in Millennial Harbinger, “We expect and hope to travel more than usual during the ensuing year, the Lord willing. On deciding the rival claims of numerous sections, we incline not to be arbitrary, and have nearly adopted this resolution --- to be governed by the number of readers we have in various places, our experience hitherto proving that we can be most useful in those regions, because there is something to work upon in the minds of such communities.” That said it for me also.

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WHERE IS THE PATTERN FOR RESTORATION?

In spite of the name that this journal bears I have in recent years grown increasingly suspicious of the term *restoration.* Since the word may be defined in different ways, I suppose we will retain the title, even though *renewal* impresses me as a more appropriate appellation. *Renewal*, just the one word, is the name I might now choose. But after 22 years name changing seems foolish. It would be like changing Ouida’s name. Pragmatically wise perhaps, but emotionally disturbing. It’s like the fellow that got tagged with Marmaduke. He figured it was better than having no name at all.

We are properly restorationists if we mean that our task is to restore to the church of our time what we believe to be lacking, such as the unity and fellowship of the Spirit. Restoration also implies a cleansing experience, such as would be the case in the removal of dirt and grime from a precious painting that has come upon hard times. Restoring a painting or even an old home does not mean that they do not exist and that the task is really a reproduction job. Things are done *to* the painting so as to restore it to its pristine elegance. Some things may be removed, true, and some things added, yes, but the basic quality has always been there, whether a painting, a house, or *the church.*

The church has always been, ever since the Spirit of Christ breathed it into existence. And it has always needed to be reformed, even from the’ outset, for it has always been made up of fallible men and women, usually distributed into congregations. No congregation yet has been perfect. No Christian has ever yet been completely without error. Now and again throughout history the church of Jesus Christ has had a hard time of it, and sometimes it has been so serious that it could be described as a “falling away,” to

use Paul's language. But the church has never apostatized itself out of existence, out of God's favor perhaps, but it has never ceased to exist. This is because the church is the Body of Christ, and as long as there are people *in Christ* the Body is a reality, and never mind about how many popes or heresies you can count. Heresies may impinge upon the Body but they can never destroy it, not even all the powers of the Hadean world. That is what Jesus said in the few recorded instances that he said anything about the church: *The gates of the underworld shall never hold out against it!* (Mt. 16:18).

But to many of our people the task of restoration is to bring into existence what once was and then ceased to be. It is indeed an accomplished fact in what we call the Church of Christ, which is seen as an exact reproduction of the apostolic church. The New Testament is viewed as "the pattern" for this accomplishment. That this pattern has yielded six or eight different kinds of Churches of Christ, each claiming to be the true church, does not appear to be disturbing, not to mention upwards of 400 sects through the centuries that have adopted the restorationist-patternistic philosophy. If one looks at the record, he should at least be suspicious of the claim that the New Testament is a blueprint or a constitution that clearly prescribes all the details of what the church is to be. What kind of a "pattern" is it that yields 400 different kinds of "true" churches, all the way from Shakerism to Mormonism - and Church of Christism?

An example of Church of Christism may be seen in an ad that appeared in the *Erwin Record* in Tennessee last Christmas Eve. Published by the Love Station Church of Christ of Erwin, the ad is a cartoon strip that depicts a lad making a purchase for his father. "Get a blue one," the father tells him, but as the frames continue the son eventually delivers a red one to the father, saying," "You didn't say *not* to get red." Besides, opines the son, isn't one color as good as another, and is it not a matter of interpretation anyway? But the father has the last word, insisting that the difference is that he had specified blue.

All this is perfectly clear to the Church of Christ mind, if not to others, and one need not read the copy that follows the cartoon, which has more of the same. "Let's suppose you are ordering a suit of clothes, size 40, from a catalogue," the ad goes on to say. "Obviously you wouldn't have to tell them not to send size 42, 38, 44, etc., nor not to send blue, green, gray etc. When you stipulated what you wanted you would expect them to abide by your request." This is the way it is in the service of God, the ad goes on to say. "We are to do 'all things according to the pattern'," it urges, quoting Heb. 8:3. To do something that is not specified in the Bible is to go beyond the doctrine of Christ, the reader is told, and the proof text is 2 Jn. 9.

The ad is another instance of the fallacy of irrelevance. It simply does not get at the problem of interpreting Scripture for modern man. We have no problem with what God clearly says in Scripture, such as "Get me a blue one." We may not always obey the injunctions against murder, anger, and greed and for love, joy, and peace, but we all agree on the right and wrong of these things. If God says, "Get me a blue one," the various sects of the Church of Christ (and others too of course) would argue over *how* to go about getting a blue one, or *where* to get a blue one, or *from whom* to get a blue one, and even *with whom can* we *cooperate* in getting a blue one. History bears witness to the fact that we divide over *methods* of doing what God says rather than over what He actually says.

The Tennessee ad reflects a costly fallacy in the way we view the Bible, as if it were a catalogue that lists specifics not unlike a Sears-Roebuck mailout. There is only one way to interpret a Sears catalogue, and it is folly to suggest that the Bible is this kind of book. We are all going to come up with varying interpretations over much of the Scriptures, whether it be *Isaiah, Romans,* or *Revelation.* When we are dealing with the *facts* set forth in the Bible there can be substantial agreement, and that is why our pioneers were wise in predicating unity and fellowship only upon facts (not opinions about those facts), especially the facts of the gospel. Opinions never saved or condemned anyone, they would insist, but facts *are* redemptive in that they reveal what God has done in history through Christ.

This Church of Christism, which in essence says that others are not Christians unless they see and do just as we see and do, is further evident in a new publication from Rowlett, Texas called *The Restorer.* In a one-page spread there is an urgent warning signed by 15 preachers and elders in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area entitled "Perilous Times Confront the Church." Among the eight perils listed one is the practice of "children's church." The evil here, we are told, is "separating some Christians from the worship assembly of the whole church," and the prooftext is I Cor. 14:23, where it refers to the whole church gathered into one place (it also refers to their speaking in tongues!). Another peril is "using denominational people" (we aren't denominational of course!), such as in the James Dobson films, which have the added sin of instrumental music in the background. The proof text here is I Jn. 9-11, where an apostle draws the line on those who deny that Jesus came in the flesh (verse 7). This means you sin in showing a Dobson film!

It is all right, of course, to show a Jules Miller film, for he is "Church of Christ" and not "denominational." But since proof texts are called for, where is the Scripture for any kind of film? And if I Cor. 14:23 means we cannot separate the children into a "children's church," why does it not also prohibit Sunday School? If our folk insist on legalistic interpretation, they must remember one basic rule: *that which proves too much proves*

nothing. If they do not watch, the very proof texts they use to condemn others will condemn themselves. Rom. 2:1 is the prooftext!!

But I wish to close out this piece with good news. In still another publication from within our larger Movement, *Envoy,* emanating from Emmanuel School of Religion, Fred P. Thompson says some helpful things about the meaning of restoration. He first shows that the notion of restoring the New Testament church is misleading, for *which* New Testament church should be restored since they were all different in some important respects? After conceding that none of the churches in the New Testament, nor all of them in the aggregate, are appropriate models for the church today, he finds the pattern in "the true character of the church disclosed in the apostolic testimony."

While the ideal church did not exist in apostolic times, just as it does not in this century, it nonetheless appears in the teaching of Christ and the apostles. President Thompson wisely distinguishes between the *advocacy* of the ideal and the *achievement* of the ideal. When we confuse these and suppose we achieve the ideal because we advocate it, we end up with the false conclusion that we and we only are the true church.

We could not agree more, and we find his conclusions refreshing. Yes, the ideal church is in Scripture, not in the way that goods are described in a catalogue or instructions in a blueprint, but in what might be called "the apostolic experiment." From all that is written to the churches, the good and the bad alike, along with the struggle to respond faithfully to the gospel, the ideal church emerges. As for the differences we find both in the congregations in apostolic times and those today, there was and is but one answer: *in matters of opinion, liberty.* A church will decide for itself if it chooses to join in cooperative enterprises such as a society, or whether it will have a Sunday School or a children's church, or an instrument. Contrary to the thrust of the plea referred to, it is not necessarily "perilous times" when such differences obtain.

We are in far greater peril when we wrest and twist the Scriptures so as to bend them to the will and whim of our own sectarian bigotry, and thus make of the Bible a kind of book that God never intended, a claim that it does not even make for itself. --- *the Editor*

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OUR CHANGING WORLD

Karl Barth, who died a decade or so ago, was perhaps the most famous theologian of his day. Books by him and about him have continued to be published since his death, the latest one being a collection of his letters, which reveal the humility of the man. Granting that it was nice to be famous, he urged his admirers to refrain from making a myth of him, for "the angels will certainly not like that and the perspicacious will see through it to my shame." He asked his friends to do their thing better than he had done his "to the glory of God and his friends." Barth was among the German churchmen who refused to take the oath of allegiance to Adolf Hitler, but what I like most of all is the story growing out of his visit to the United States. Asked by a seminarian what his most profound thought had been, he replied: "I learned it at my Mother's knee: 'Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.'" On his 75th birthday he wrote about all the praise he had received, and asked a very sobering question, *But who will be finally praised?*

One of our readers and longtime friend, David McCormick of Amarillo, Tx., writes us of the success of his cochlear implant for his hearing. He told of calling his wife from work and hearing her voice on the phone for the first time in 20 years. We rejoice with him and thank God for this breakthrough in modern science.

July 17-19 is the date for an Elders Workshop at Abilene Christian University. One speaker *is* Jon Jones of Richland Hills Church of Christ, Ft. Worth, whose subject is "Shepherding for Involvement." This is in conjunction with the university's National Christian Education Conference, which features Sen. Orrin Hatch, Roger Staubach, and the presidents of Baylor and Oklahoma universities, Abner McCall and Bill Banowsky. You can write for further information: Box 8159, Abilene, Tx. 79699.

The new educational-office facility of the Broadway Church of Christ in Lubbock is described as "overwhelming" by those who have seen it. Four stories high, it has a glass elevator from which one can see the open elegance of the structure, something like a Hyatt Regency hotel. The minister has a suite of offices, luxuriously appointed, and there are numerous offices for the church's rather extensive staff. The elders' have their own suite, and the seating arrangement provides special places for the chairmen. Classrooms are ultra modern and can be adjusted to allow for large open areas. We are told that the elegance and modernity are such that there is no way to do it justice in print. And for those who would criticize this sort of thing, we are assured that if Jesus of Nazareth were to appear at the front door on the foal of an ass he *would* be welcome.

There is an elegance of a different sort at still another Church of Christ, which we will not further identify. A preacher in the membership (but not the minister of the church) who has long been known as an arch-conservative undertook to expose the "liberal tendencies" of the congregation by writing letters to our chief editors and wing commanders,

particularly in Austin and Nashville. He also maneuvered among the members, sowing discord. But it all boomeranged. The editors did not rally to his side, and the members have had enough of the old legalisms. The elders, who have been overly gracious to the brother, have at last put him under discipline; warning him that he must cease his factious behavior or be excluded from the fellowship of the congregation. This is an encouraging news item and I am persuaded that it rides the crest of the future for Churches of Christ. At last we have begun to discipline the real heretics and troublemakers. The true heretic is not one who refuses to brand instrumental music a sin or who accepts a Baptist as his brother, but the one who demands that everybody else sees things the way he does and will divide the church if they don't. The old oppressive blood and guts tactics are not working like they used to, and thank God for that! And in a few more years such bruisers are going to find themselves without a job if they don't do some changing. But never sell short the power of money to modify positions!

One of our readers in Arizona, remembering our article on Church of Christ weddings, sent us this story: "I am a Christian Church pastor, was married by another Christian Church pastor in a Church of Christ building with the Church of Christ minister playing the guitar and his wife playing the piano! Who knows but what things are changing?"

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READERS' EXCHANGE

Your articles have helped me to overcome much of my bitterness towards legalistic Christians. I've only received your publication for a year, but really appreciate it. I know many in the church who are struggling. Could you deal in your articles with how we can help others to accept those of us with freer ideas instead of fighting against us. We need some practical ideas, for we are discouraged and worn down by those few who insist on everyone following their legalistic views and are so outspoken. --- *Martha Williamson, Aurora, Co.*

Your writing has strengthened my faith and motivated me to share the Good News. Please continue to write on "With All Your Mind," for this has helped to straighten out my thinking. As Christians we need to have clear, reasonable thinking. --- *Dana Bloxom --- 4024 Boyd, Ft. Worth 76109*

The church here is progressing very well. Our most recent project is showing the James Dobson films on family life for the community. - *Rob Smith, West Lafayette, IN.*

(The Dobson films have been shown in numerous of our churches, including ours in Denton. It is a modest effort toward bringing "outsiders" into our programs, and a broadening of our fellowship. Thank God for tape and Celluloid! - *Ed.)*

Your article on restoration or reformation is very pertinent, as there is obviously a mass of confusion as to the term restoration. I personally do not like the term *reform,* preferring the word *conform.* As believers, we all have the Scriptures and the example of Christ to which to conform. --- *Bob L. Ross, Pasadena, TX* (a Baptist preacher notorious for writing and debating about Campbellism!)

I am very sorry to learn God does not talk to you about your personal life in your day by day walk. How else do you walk in the Spirit; --- *June Mitchell, Farmington, NM.*

(God does "talk" to me through his Son by way of his chosen envoys (Heb. 1:1; I Cor. 2:13) in the scriptures. The Spirit dwells within me, and thereby helps, comforts, leads, disciplines, and enlightens me, opening my "inner eyes" to what is already revealed. But he does not give "visions and revelations" or write new Bibles, either for the Mormons or for us. If we would all apply our minds diligently to the revelation we already have, which is sufficient for "life and godliness," we would be amply employed with what God has said. --- *Ed.*)

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BOOK NOTES

So long as the Mormon elders are out doing their thing, Harry L. Ropp's *The Mormon Papers* will continue to be an important resource in responding to them. The evidence- he presents is persuasive to the open mind. We have a new supply at 4.10 postpaid.

Howard Snyder's *The Community of the King,* published in 1977, is back on our shelves and available at 4.85 postpaid. A study of the nature of the church, it deals with the problem of forms and structures. It is especially appropriate for people concerned with the nature of the primitive church.

William Barclay's *Daily Celebration* was in two volumes, but only vol. 2 is available, and you may not be able to get it much longer. It consists of down-to-earth comments on how to live in our kind of world. 6.50 postpaid.

Do you find life persistently perplexing?, to use Paul Yonggie Cho's term in *Solving Life's Problems.* He also tells you how to deal with deception and how to live with God each day. It has a lot to offer at only 4.95 pp.

A very perceptive Presbyterian minister (I went to Princeton with him!) says a lot of challenging things for folk like us in his *Locked in a Room with Open Doors,* which we can send you for only 4.50 pp. Ernie Campbell is one of the great preachers of our time, much of it being at the Riverside Church in New York. Rich in illustrations, his lessons are both simple and profound, and this is a book that could excite you.

Commitment is a watchword in these days of broken marriages and broken homes. We commend Elizabeth Achtemeier's *The Committed Marriage* as part of the answer to conflicts in marriage. She is a homiletics professor at Union Seminary (New York) and deals with the larger issue of the role of women from the Biblical perspective. 5.50 pp.

As long as it is in print we will continue to tell our readers of John R. W. Stott's *Christ the Controversialist,* which remains after a decade one of the most informative books I've read. It deals with Jesus' confrontation with the religionists of his day and puts a finger on what is really basic to the Christian faith. It is still only 4.50 pp.

The College Press series on *What the Bible Says* is very well done, being both resourceful and responsible. Julia Staton's *What the Bible Says About Women* leaves no stone unturned, even dealing with the woman's inner self. Other volumes in the series are Robert Palmer's *What the Bible Says About Faith and Opinion;* Russell Boatman's *What the Bible Says About the End Time;* James Van Buren and Don DeWelt on *What the Bible Says About Praise and Promise.* 13.50 each pp.

Since we are a people born of freedom, we should be aware of any serious effort to set Christian freedom in perspective. We should be able to identify with this Seventh Day Adventist pastor who became addicted with legalism and a works gospel, "self-effort" he calls it. He tells you what the Sabbath finally came to mean to him and how he found the Cross, after being sidetracked now and again. We recommend Sam Pestes' *Christian, Be Free!,* which we can supply at 4.50 pp.

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